

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application and entry of this Amendment are solicited. Claims 1-9 will be pending in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

Discussion of Amendments to the Claims

Claim changes proposed above are the result of various discussions between the undersigned and Examiner Hopkins on March 4 and March 17, 2010. Initially the examiner suggested that the process steps in each of the independent claims be stated in a more positive manner and as a series of steps. In addition to clarifying the claims these changes also further remove the claimed process from the disclosures of the applied prior art for the reasons discussed during the interviews of March 4 and 17, 2010 and also as set out in more detail below.

Claims 1, 3, 6, and 8 have been amended to correct indefinite expressions.

Claims 1, 3, 6, and 8 have been amended to recite that “the stop of the TSA apparatus includes an urgent stop and a planned stop”. This amendment is supported by page 5, lines 9-14 of the present specification.

Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to recite “stopping the TSA apparatus when the purge gas temperature reaches the peak temperature”. This amendment is supported by page 20, lines 15-19 of the present specification.

Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Response to Prior Art Rejections

The outstanding Office Action asserted that Claims 1-9 (as previously presented) are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Kalbassi et al. (US 5,855,650). In particular, the outstanding Office Action asserted that Claims 1-9 are described on column 6, lines 59-67 and column 7, lines 1-14 of Kalbassi et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As described in Claims 1, 3, 6, and 8, the restart method of the present invention distinguishes the time point of the stop of the TSA apparatus into the 3 cases: i), ii), and iii), and the appropriate sealing process and restart process of the TSA apparatus are performed in each of those 3 cases i), ii), and iii).

According to the present invention, it is possible to provide highly purified air even after a long-term stop without performing the self regeneration operation, and the time period from the restart of the TSA apparatus to the start of feeding a purified air to the cryogenic air separation

plant is smaller than the time period required for the self regeneration operation (i.e. at least 4 hours). Therefore, it is possible to quickly restart the TSA apparatus and to perform steady operation without causing the breakthrough.

In contrast, Kalbassi et al. is silent regarding the sealing process and restart process and the advantageous effects thereof.

Therefore, Claims 1, 3, 6, and 8 include features that are not anticipated by Kalbassi et al., and are allowable. The rejected Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, and 9 are dependent on the allowable Claims 1, 3, 6, or 8, and are also allowable. *See MPEP §2143.03.*

Reconsideration, entry of this Amendment and allowance are solicited. If for any reason this Amendment does not place all claims in condition for allowance the examiner is urged to contact the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency, or credit any overpayment, in the fee(s) filed, or asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 14-1140.

Respectfully submitted,

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